

guardian of social peace and political equilibrium." When he was appointed Foreign Minister in 1809, at the age of 36, Metternich was well equipped by experience and self-confidence to confront the monster of anarchy. The next six years were the climax of his life.

The *History of the Alliances*, 1813-1814, the fullest and most valuable of the three parts which make up the Autobiography, denounces Napoleon as the sole cause of perpetual wars, for the French nation, in Metternich's opinion, wanted peace. Europe looked to Austria for salvation and did not look in vain. In his dramatic rendering of the famous nine-hour interview at the Marcolini Palace at Dresden in 1813, the greatest moment of his life, he declares that he considered himself as the representative of the whole European community. When the megalomaniac arrogantly declined the proffered mediation, Metternich quietly rejoined : *Vous gtes perdu, Sire*. On his way out, in reply to Berthier's inquiry, he merely remarked *Oest un homme perdu*, and the incorrigible warmonger staggered to his doom at Leipzig. Austria intervened at the right time, as Metternich had always intended she should. In an elaborate character study of Napoleon written in 1820 he writes with remarkable detachment of the man whom he claimed to know better than anyone in Europe. The Emperor is described as a parvenu and an actor, a good son and a good relative, not a bad husband. As a private person he was neither good nor bad. The most extraordinary man in history had great qualities, but it would be a mistake to exaggerate his greatness, and he was lucky in his opportunities.

As Talleyrand observed to Alexander, he was uncivilised.

To the end of his life Metternich's greatest delight was to describe his decisive share as the brain of the victorious

alliance, and such indeed he was. When the news of the escape from Elba reached Vienna during the Congress, he hurried to his master, then to the Tsar Alexander, Frederick William in and Schwarzenberg. The renewal of the war was decided in less than an hour, and Waterloo was the result. Francis is praised for his firmness and calmness. Alexander is defined as a singular blend of masculine qualities and feminine weaknesses. Castlereagh is praised for his reliable character and conservative views. Metternich is least just in his groundless condemnation of Stein as deriving from the petty of revolution. He could never understand any one with the least tincture of liberalism in his composition or take what was